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ABSTRACT

Seven planning conditions necessary if junior colleges, both independent and public, are to maximize their chances for accomplishing change and self-renewal are summarized: (1) balancing of qualitative and quantitative planning, (2) establishing college priorities, (3) integrating college planning with that in related areas, (4) linking resources to college priorities, (5) carrying out research and development activities, (6) opening structures for participation, (7) building external support. Suggested ways of meeting these conditions are made. (Author)

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Substantive Planning for Independent Junior Colleges

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Summarizes seven planning conditions necessary if independent junior colleges are to maximize their chances for accomplishing change and self-renewal: (1) balancing of qualitative and quantitative planning, (2) establishing college priorities, (3) integrating college planning with that in related areas, (4) linking resources to college priorities, (5) carrying out research and development activities, (6) opening structures for participation, (7) building external support. Suggested ways of meeting these conditions are made.

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Substantive Planning for Independent Junior Colleges

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During the post-Sputnik era, three different but overlapping crises have confronted higher education. The quantitative crisis brought on by the post-war baby boom led to enrollment increases and facilities expansion for virtually all institutions. This crisis helped precipitate the fiscal crisis that first emerged in the early sixties and perhaps reached its peak by the end of the decade. All in higher education are aware of the hardships this crisis has caused: program cutbacks, tuition increases, burgeoning financial aid budgets and even nonrenewal letters for tenured faculty. The third crisis which has come about only in part because of the previous two may cause even greater fundamental changes for it is a qualitative crisis.

There is a growing concern about the basic aims and purposes presently held in junior colleges, four-year undergraduate colleges, and universities. Bored students, defensive administrators, and uncertain faculty members have helped cause insiders and outsiders alike to lose faith in our institutions of higher learning. Reform is the order of the day but too often, because ways of bringing about organized change are not well known in colleges, reform efforts lead instead to retrenchment along established lines of development. Retrenchment may for a time

alleviate the forces of the quantitative and fiscal crises, but its long term effect is pernicious. As Donald E. Deyo provocatively states in the introduction to the independent college section of American Junior Colleges: Eighth Edition: "...without innovative programs, private junior colleges will die." Thus, the thesis of this paper: to counteract the turbulent forces of the 20th Century, independent junior colleges must initiate and maintain substantive planning processes.

Substantive planning differs from more typical irregular and reactive expedient planning in that it is concerned with the content and techniques for change incorporated into the process. Achieving substantive planning in independent junior colleges requires that seven conditions be met:

1. balancing of qualitative and quantitative planning
2. establishing college priorities
3. integrating college planning with that in related areas
4. linking resources to college priorities
5. carrying-out research and development activities
6. opening structures for participation
7. building external support

An independent junior college that meets these seven conditions maximizes its chances of accomplishing change and organizational self-renewal.

1. Balancing of qualitative and quantitative planning -- The major concern of most public and many independent institutions of

higher learning during the quantitative crisis was planning for growth - erecting more buildings to house more faculty who teach more courses to more students. Questions raised by this means-oriented process are largely of class size, student/faculty ratios, classroom utilization, student station utilization, student credit hours produced, and cost per unit. Such questions are important. Indeed, even in times of no growth or decrease, any institution which ignores quantitative matters is on most dangerous ground. However, as several recent reports on planning note (including the Newman Report, Report on Higher Education-1972; many of the Carnegie Commission publications; the Worth Commission report on education in Alberta, A Choice of Futures; and accounts of various UNESCO meetings) there is another side to planning. These reports suggest that just as important as quantitative planning is qualitative planning which focuses on "ends" of the educational enterprise rather than on the "means." Philip Coombs agrees with neither camp noting that quantitative and qualitative planning are merely opposite sides of the same coin, closely interrelated and not meaningfully separated:

> The qualitative aspects of educational planning must be concerned with a host of things - with who is taught, what is taught, and how it is taught; with who are the learners and how they learn; with the fitness of educational content to the real needs of students and society; with the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of the educational process, including how it is organized, planned and managed; and above all with educational change and innovation aimed at adapting education to the changing world around it. ("Time for a Change of Strategy," in Qualitative Aspects of Educational Planning, UNESCO: International Institute of Educational Planning, 1969, Paris, France)

The argument presented here is similar: a rich interaction of both quantitative and qualitative elements is necessary if planning is to do more than reinforce the existing system.

2. Establishing college priorities -- Two basic problems in planning are determining what to analyze and over what period of time. In independent junior colleges, the first problem is complicated by the breadth of functions normally served and by the divergence of perspectives on what constitutes appropriate lines of program development. To avoid battles about whose goals to use, decisions on such matters are sometimes made ad hoc by a coterie of institutional leaders. Policy choices made in this way tend to be piecemeal and should not be labeled planning. However, the opposite extreme - detached, comprehensive planning stretched over lengthy cycles - presents other dangers. First, the detachment may be so complete as to bring about Utopian goals. Secondly, the comprehensiveness may force superficial treatment of complex topics. To combat these difficulties, substantive planning combines both short and long time frames in a continuous planning process.

The establishment of fundamental college goals, strategic planning, should take place over a long time frame. Strategic planning decisions must be reviewed regularly but seldom drastically changed. Tactical planning, on the other hand, devises the means to achieve the college goals. Such planning decisions often need revision. While at times tactical decisions amend or even void

strategic decisions, their basic difference is that no specific attempt is made during the short-term, means-oriented tactical cycles to rewrite comprehensive strategic premises. Thus, in summary, substantive planning requires a continuous planning process combining tactical concepts in short time frames and strategic concepts in long time frames. The result should be specific, up-to-date, and realistic college priorities.

3. Integrating college planning with that in related areas -- Closely linked to establishing system priorities in the seven conditions of effective planning for organizational self-renewal is the need to integrate such planning with that in other pertinent areas: the surrounding community, secondary education, other institutions of higher learning, appropriate industries, etc. Open systems research demonstrates that an organization's character is largely determined by what goes on in its environment. To ignore the environment in planning can therefore be disastrous. For example, higher educational institutions for years ignored the curriculum of secondary education. As more and more overlap occurred in freshman and sophomore curricula, student dissatisfaction increased. This dissatisfaction is a factor, though certainly not the only factor, in current high levels of transfer and attrition in higher education.

Another advantage of integrating a college's educational planning with related areas if found in the consortium movement. Interinstitutional cooperative programs can help an individual institution to expand student and faculty opportunities, promote greater managerial

efficiency, promote innovation, promote faculty interpersonal contacts, and have a larger impact on public policy. The current attempt to plan for more cooperation among all institutions, public and private, within the eight regions of New York by the State Education Department is grounded upon perceived successes of various interinstitutional cooperative experiments. In short, consortium activities can be an effective way to get a bigger bang out of your educational buck.

A third part of the rationale for integrating planning is found in employment offices around the country. In recent years, many people have prepared for jobs that simply are not there. While it is naive to assume that perfect job market projections can be made, attention to such manpower forecasts as The Outlook for Technological Change and Employment by the Bureau of Labor Statistics is useful.

4. Linking resources to college priorities -- Once college priorities are established and integrated with those in related areas, it becomes crucial to ensure that subsequent decisions about the allocation of financial, human, and physical resources reinforce and implement these priorities. This linkage involves more than just budget allocation because policies decided in other areas (e.g., student admissions standards, faculty recruitment, faculty load standards, administrative staff utilization) also are important in successful implementation of established goals. Here are five general guidelines for developing and strengthening the relationship

between long range premises and short range decisions:

First, as suggested earlier, a regular and continuous process of planning should exist wherein priorities among programs, functions, goals, and objectives of the institution are set and reviewed.

Second, quantitative measures should be made so that knowledgeable decisions about the effects of specific resource allocation choices are possible.

Third, efforts should be made to involve many persons and groups - faculty, students, administrators, and others - in the actual resource management decision-making process.

Fourth, the involvement of these persons and groups in the allocation process must be clearly delimited so that the job can be completed within a reasonable time frame. Another reason for the clear delimitation is that unhappiness of some parties is a likely result of unspecified roles.

Fifth, any formula or guideline developed for the allocation of resources should receive periodic review, expressly to eliminate elements that constrain institutional renewal by contributing to rigidity and uniformity in college operations. For example, a departmental budget planning formula built on classroom use may seriously impinge on the likelihood of departments looking into such nontraditional learning methodologies as field studies, work-study programs, internships, independent study programs, and the like. Thus, this step is most critical in ensuring that linkage of resource allocation with college priorities is a regular process.

5. Carrying-out research and development activities -- Undertaking the preceding steps in the substantive planning process presumably will bring about a set of planning priorities for a college, linkages between these priorities and those in related areas, and ultimately translation of priorities into practice via decisions about resource allocation. The planning package is, however, not complete

without a formalized and continuous process of analysis, evaluation, and testing of alternatives. In actual practice, it is probable that several important institutional planning tasks can be accomplished through such a research program: the clarification and modification of goals, the evaluation of program priorities, the determination of how well resource allocation methods support priorities, identification of strengths and weaknesses in current programs and instructional methods, the assessment of how well graduates match societal labor requirements, and the development of confidence in the significance of planning and system renewal activities. Perhaps these possibilities seem lofty, but as Kjell Eide noted in a recent paper on the subject:

> Only through use of informative criticism can organizations adapt to changing conditions and reach rational decisions....If informative criticism is to become general and penetrate all layers of educational activities, educational research has an essential role to play... ("Educational Research Policy," CERI/EI/70.01, Paris, 30th September, 1971, pp. 9-13)

A serious problem in establishing institutional research programs in independent two-year colleges (or in any institution for that matter) is the high cost of maintaining a research staff. There is no easy way around this problem but one possible solution is for several institutions to carry out a cooperative institutional research program. Having a team (one researcher from each member institution) utilize identical methodologies over several campuses provides valuable intra- and interinstitutional data at modest cost. A side

benefit of such an approach is that lack of full-time manpower often forces part-time use of regular faculty in the studies which can result in widespread commitment to the research and its findings. (Note: If faculty involvement in this effort is substantial or if the local researcher is also a part-time administrator or faculty member, involvement in the research program should be formally acknowledged in tenure and promotion decisions.)

6. Opening structures for participation -- A common feature of planning in most colleges is its closed and centralized nature. Input from faculty, students, other institutional personnel, and outside interest groups such as parents, townspeople, potential donors, and alumni exists but their involvement is usually circumscribed. One danger cited in the wealth of organizational research calling for greater participation is planner impatience with institutional sluggishness to change. Another danger is planner isolation from valuable inputs. However, most important of all, institutional change is much more likely when those to be affected by the planning decisions feel that they have had their day in court. Examples abound of technically sound plans which never become implemented because people at the grass roots level do not accept the plan as legitimate. In complex professional organizations such as independent junior colleges, a veto of no commitment is strongest of all.

A considerable price must be paid to obtain acceptance of a plan for change. The most obvious problem is the time required to mount a comprehensive consultative process. Planning schedules must

be stretched out and publicized. (Note: The planning schedule in the NACUBO system being used at this conference is a good starting point for it allows for most institutions sufficient time at each stage of the process.) Another problem is the parochial flavor of much advice that will be tendered. Administrators, faculty, department chairmen, and students will all understandably advance opinions highly colored by their differing perspectives and biases. This necessitates that someone blend the perspectives into cohesive strategic and tactical objectives.

Two other less obvious problems stand in the way of opening up the planning process to widespread participation. The first is an old one, faculty conservatism. Faculty often are reluctant participants for the simple reason that many do not consider planning a legitimate part of the role. (Palola, E. et al, "The Reluctant Planner: Reasons for Faculty Involvement in Institutional Planning," Journal of Higher Education, Vol. XLII, No. 7, October 1971.) While some "young Turks" chafe under traditional policies of reward, promotion, and professional status, these policies are working favorably for the "established" teaching staff so change has little appeal to them. The second less obvious problem is student distrust of planning. Many students want change but feel there is little chance for significant movement in traditional centers of campus power. Thus, they default in apparent anomie. Only extra effort of those now in control will solve these harmful problems.

One possibility for obtaining needed input from the too-often silent faculty and students was suggested earlier; through research. Much information can be gained through use of one-to-one interviews, recorded group interviews (e.g., with departments, with student living units) and through appropriate survey instruments. Use of these methods prevents overreliance on technical committees and on the inputs of the activist students and faculty. Thus, research is especially useful in obtaining relatively unpoliticized input.

7. Building external support -- The seventh condition of substantive planning, one often overlooked in higher education, is the building of external support for the planning process. As noted earlier, independent junior colleges are open systems in dynamic interaction with,and therefore affected by,their environments. To overlook the concerns of persons external to the campus can be perilous.

The first problem faced in building external support for the planning process is determining who are the relevant externals. Certainly parents and alumni qualify. Also warranting consideration are recent donors, large and small, and persons from the immediate surrounding area. If interinstitutional cooperation is to be a part of the final plan, representatives of the other institutions should be involved. The next problem is determining what will build support. As suggested earlier, allowing participation is effective. The third problem then is deciding what constitutes appropriate participation.

Possibilities include advisory committees, research surveys, and open meetings. A fourth problem faced in building external support for planning is determining at what stage outsiders should become involved. If involvement comes too early, this may impinge on the creativeness of the plan. Initial stages of each planning cycle should not be overly hindered by the perceived realities of the situation. Introducing reality too soon undoubtedly would have ended the development of a crazy notion for the TV show now called "Sesame Street."

It is important to build external support because a plan unrecognized by those with the dollars to make it go is worthless. One viable way is to encourage commitment through involvement in the actual planning process.

Summary

Without a self renewing process, organizations tend to stagnate. Amitai Etzioni, in his book The Active Society writes:

> Without consciousness, the collective actor is unaware of his identity, his being acted upon, his ability to act, and his power; he is passive, like a sleeping giant. Without commitment to a purpose, action lacks direction and merely drifts. Without power, the most incisive and sharply focused awareness of the firmest commitment will not yield more action than a derailed train. To be active is to be aware, committed, and potent. (1968, p. 5)

Along the same lines, Bennis and Slater write in The Temporary Society:

> Organizations, as well as societies, must be concerned with those social conditions that engender bouyancy,

> resilience, and a fearlessness of revision. Growth and decay emerge as the penultimate problem in contemporary society where the environment is turbulent and uncertain. (1968, p. 57)

For independent junior colleges to avoid stagnation and remain potent and resiliant requires substantive planning. The institution that meets the seven conditions to substantive planning - balancing of qualitative and quantitative planning, establishing college priorities, integrating college educational planning with that in related sectors, linking resources to college priorities, carrying-out research and development activities, opening structures for participation, building external support - maximizes its chances of becoming a dynamic, self-renewing organization.

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